



Minutes of Business and Economic Development Committee

December 7, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

Chair and Secretary Participating Remotely
The Corporation of the Town of Orangeville

Members Present: Councillor Joe Andrews
D. Morris, Dufferin Board of Trade
T. Brett, Orangeville BIA
W. Edwards, Public Member

Members Absent: B. Pitt, Greater Dufferin Home Builders' Association (regrets)
L. Horne, Orangeville Real Estate Board (regrets)
P. Cervený, Public Member

Staff Present: R. Phillips, Manager, Economic Development & Culture
B. Lusk, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Councillor Andrews called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

2. Disclosures of (Direct or Indirect) Pecuniary Interest

None.

3. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

3.1 2021-09-21 Business and Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes

Recommendation: Business and Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes

Moved by T. Brett

That minutes of the following meeting are approved:

2021-09-21 Business and Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes

Carried

4. Presentations

4.1 Ruth Phillips, Manager, Economic Development and Culture

R. Phillips provided an overview of the major initiatives that the Economic Development & Culture office had worked on from January to November 2021.

Highlighted items included the delivery of a Virtual Advisory program that had assisted local business owners in overcoming challenges and barriers

in their ventures as a result of COVID. The program was delivered with a \$32,000 grant from the province and additional divisional operating funds were redirected to the program to enable more businesses to access specialized professional advice.

R. Phillips said that the Economic Development & Culture office had offered two Digital Main Street programs in 2021. The second version of the program ended in March and contributed \$115,000 to businesses in Dufferin County. The third version of the Digital Transformation Grant program, which began in August, had, to date, awarded \$2,500 grants to 28 businesses with another 22 applications approved for funding. R. Phillips advised that the third Digital program would wrap up in late February 2022.

R. Phillips advised that work on the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) continued and that a virtual public meeting was held in November to provide updates and an overview of emerging proposed directions for the Town's new CIP.

R. Phillips reported that an Economic Impact Study and Phase 1 & 2 Environmental Assessments for the vacant land at 82, 86-90 Broadway had been completed in 2021, and that no remediation would be required at the location. She said that a Parking Review would also be presented to Council in early 2022.

R. Phillips said that site remediation of the property at 30 Centennial Road was completed in the Fall and that the site was now ready for development of the new Orangeville Fire Station.

R. Phillips said that with the adoption of the Tourism Strategy in January 2021, staff had moved forward to complete a number of first year recommendations, including the introduction of a new tourism blog and Driftscape app featuring tourism attractions, new additions to the photography library, and updated Way Finding Signage.

She presented the new tourism brand, 'Love, Orangeville' which was adopted by Council in November and advised that the new brand 'Love, Orangeville' would be incorporated to tourism promotional materials. She said that a Tourism micro-website would be launched early in 2022 using the new branding.

Goals for 2022 were outlined. R. Phillips said that if a grant application was successful, the Economic Development & Culture office would offer a Local Business Accelerator program to downtown Orangeville entrepreneurs in 2022. The Local Business Accelerator program would provide a detailed market analysis of the downtown core and help identify and fill gaps for participating area businesses. She stated that the Local Business Accelerator program would help offset the impact of the Broadway reconstruction scheduled for Fall 2022.

R. Phillips said that in 2022 the Economic Development & Culture office would work with the Planning Division to initiate steps towards the implementation of the CIP after its approval by Council.

She indicated that the Economic Development & Culture office would continue to respond to the impact of COVID on businesses and give priority to supporting business recovery efforts.

R. Phillips said that the current Small Business Enterprise Centre contract would expire in March 2022 and that staff would be working on a new SBEC business plan to guide the program over the next contractual period.

R. Phillips advised that the operational agreements with Theatre Orangeville for Opera House Management and the Visitor Information Centre would expire in December 2022, and that new contracts would be developed in the coming year.

She indicated that a Memorandum of Understanding with the BIA to clarify roles in joint services delivered by the Town and BIA would be drafted for Council review and approval.

4.2 Mayor Sue Perras, Town of Smooth Rock Falls Ontario (9 a.m.)

Councillor Andrews welcomed Ms. Sue Perras, Mayor of the Town of Smooth Rock Falls, Ontario.

Mayor Perras provided a background that led to the pivotal transformation of Smooth Rock Falls after the closure of the town's largest employer in 2006. She said that the loss of the sawmill caused 250 job losses, decreased property values, and the relocation of many families from the town.

Mayor Perras said that by 2014, the town's council decided to take a proactive stance toward its future by developing a 20-year Official Plan which included a Community Improvement Plan and new marketing strategies. She said a range of bold financial incentives were introduced to entice new residents and business owners to the town.

As a result of efforts made, Smooth Rock Falls has rebranded itself from a forestry town to a location known as the 'Near North, near perfect' place to live and work. Property values have spiked, and the town is launching a new 'Near North' Industrial Centre.

Mayor Perras said the success of the town's transition was a result of engaging with the community from the very start, embracing connections with the right people, repeating the town's story when government figures changed, and involving multiple press and media for marketing campaigns to bring the people to their northern town.

4.3 Mr. Jack Walsh, Director of Special Projects, Wightman (9:30 a.m.)

R. Phillips welcomed Mr. Jack Walsh, Director of Special Projects, Wightman.

J. Walsh provided a background to the family-oriented Wightman business which began in 1908. He said that the Wightman company has offered landline telephone and internet services to Orangeville since 2011 and that the company was pleased to have partnered with the Town to deliver a \$56,000,000 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) project over the next three years.

J. Walsh provided a map to demonstrate the aggressive installation schedule that Wightman is using to provide FTTH infrastructure in Orangeville. He outlined the many economic benefits of the project and discussed the company's involvement in the community.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

5.1 Official Plan Steering Committee Update - Ms. Wendy Edwards

W. Edwards reported that the Official Plan Steering Committee had not yet called its first meeting.

5.2 Member Updates

T. Brett provided an update of BIA activities. He said that the outdoor Farmers' Market ended 2021 with sales 9% higher than the 2019 pre-pandemic year and with an average of four less vendors per market.

T. Brett stated that the indoor market would open every Saturday instead of every second Saturday. He said that the indoor market had fewer vendors currently due to the COVID safety precautions in place.

T. Brett said that the BIA had launched a 'Joy Book' promotion at the Christmas tree lighting event to encourage downtown shopping during the Christmas season.

D. Morris said the Dufferin Board of Trade (DBOT) had launched a Dufferin Days Campaign to support shop local initiatives. She indicated that the campaign featured video shout outs, free gift-wrapping for locally purchased gifts, prizes, and a charitable component as well.

She said that DBOT had distributed 20,000 Rapid Test Kits to about 200 businesses and that DBOT has a contract with the Ministry until March 2022 to continue the Rapid Test Kit program.

D. Morris reported that the Biz hub continues to be popular and rental options are well utilized.

Councillor Andrews thanked DBOT for the DBOT Board Room dedication plaque in memory of Mr. Peter Renshaw.

W. Edwards provided the real estate sector report and stated that only fourteen residential and eight commercial properties were currently listed in Orangeville. She said that in Dufferin County there were 29 commercial/businesses for sale.

Councillor Andrews advised that former Upper Grand District School Board Director, Martha Rogers had passed away.

6. Correspondence

None

7. New Business

R Phillips announced that Mr. Mark Jamieson joined the Economic Development and Culture division as the new SBEC Co-ordinator in October.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.